What Is Claimed Is:

1.   A computer-implemented method of facilitating a distributed search, comprising:

receiving a search request from a user;

requesting a remote information source to conduct a remote search;

initiating a local search of a local information source;

receiving results of the remote search;

merging said remote search results with results of the local search; and

presenting said merged search results to the user.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

filtering said remote search results with a set of local rules.

3.   The method of claim 2, wherein said filtering comprises editing said remote search results according to a set of rules regarding information that may be presented to the user.

4.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

selecting said remote information source from multiple information sources.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein said remote search is conducted without the user being connected to the remote information source.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein the remote information source employs a user interface different from a user interface employed by the local

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information source.

7.   The method of claim 6, wherein said presenting comprises displaying said merged search results with the user interface employed by the
5   local information source.

8.   The method of claim 1, wherein said requesting comprises identifying to the remote information source a context in which to execute the remote search.
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9.   The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises an identity of the user.

10.   The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises an identity
15   of an organization operating the local information source.

11.   The method of claim 8, wherein said context comprises a language.

12.   The method of claim 1, wherein the remote information source
20   comprises an electronic marketplace.

13.   The method of claim 1, wherein said remote search and said local search are performed at least partially in parallel.

25   14.   A computer readable storage medium storing instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a computer-implemented method of facilitating a distributed search, the method comprising:

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receiving a search request from a user;

requesting a remote information source to conduct a remote search;

initiating a local search of a local information source;

receiving results of the remote search;

5   merging said remote search results with results of the local search; and

presenting said merged search results to the user.

15.   A method of conducting a distributed electronic search concerning a desired procurement item, comprising:

10   receiving from a user a description of an item the user desires to procure;

issuing a request to a remote procurement information source to conduct a first search for items matching said description, without the user connecting to the remote procurement information source;

providing the remote procurement information source with contextual

15   information for said first search;

performing a second search of a local procurement system for items matching said description;

receiving a first set of results responsive to said first search;

filtering said first set of results with one or more procurement rules; and

20   presenting to the user, through a single interface, said first set of results and a second set of results responsive to said second search.

16.   The method of claim 15, further comprising:

authenticating one or more of the user and the local procurement

25   information system to the remote procurement information source.

17.   The method of claim 15, further comprising:

selecting the remote procurement information source from a set of procurement information sources.

18.   The method of claim 15, wherein said issuing comprises providing the remote procurement information source with information for identifying a context in which to execute the requested search.

19.   The method of claim 15, wherein said filtering comprises removing from said first set of results any items that violate the procurement rules.

20.   The method of claim 19, wherein the procurement rules are designed to restrict items that may be procured by the user.

21.   The method of claim 15, wherein said first search and said second search are performed at least partially in parallel.

22.   A computer readable storage medium storing instructions that, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a method of conducting a distributed electronic search concerning a desired procurement item, the method comprising:
    receiving from a user a description of an item the user desires to procure;
    issuing a request to a remote procurement information source to conduct a first search for items matching said description, without the user connecting to the remote procurement information source;
    providing the remote procurement information source with contextual information for said first search;
    performing a second search of a local procurement system for items

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matching said description;

     receiving a first set of results responsive to said first search;

     filtering said first set of results with one or more procurement rules; and

     presenting to the user, through a single interface, said first set of results

5   and a second set of results responsive to said second search.

     23.   A system for facilitating a distributed search for information, comprising:

     a local information source configured to provide information to local users

10   through a first user interface;

     a communication module configured to enable said local information source to communicate with a remote information source, wherein the remote information source is configured to provide information to users through a second user interface different from the first user interface;

15   a set of rules regarding information that may be displayed to a first local user; and

     a processor configured to initiate, in response to a request from the first local user:

          a remote search of the remote information source; and

20   a local search of said local information source;

     wherein results of said remote search are filtered through said set of rules and merged with results of said local search for display to the first local user through the first user interface.

25   24.   The system of claim 23, further comprising:

     authentication means for authenticating one or more of the system and the first local user to the remote information source.

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25.   The system of claim 23, wherein said remote search and said local search are performed in parallel.

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